



The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- From the President
- May Program
- April Meeting Minutes
- Origins of Coax

How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Tom Duncan at (256)705-2147

From the President

Well, it's hard to write exciting articles about DX when the sunspot cycle has all but killed the DXpeditions that were so common just a few years ago.

But, wait, our favorite yarn-spinner, KG4CUY, will get the juices flowing again with his presentation at our next meeting. He'll talk about the beginnings of SSB, I think, and he hasn't divulged all the details to me...yet. I'm a sucker for good historical lessons, and this one will take me back to my first days in ham radio, which started in 1961, just as SSB was being introduced. I had just graduated from grammar school when my dad got me this Knight Span Master radio kit. The experience was breathtaking to me as a 13-year-old kid. I soon acquired all the magazines and catalogs I could find. They were filled with pictures of the 100-pound transmitters and receivers of the day. Then there were ads for tech schools with photos of techs, engineers, and service managers. Of course I believed this is what the guys looked like who brought these wonderful radios to me. I memorized their photos - I dreamed of talking to one of them one day. The era was the back side of the 1958 solar peak, which had the highest number of sunspots in history, and spawned countless stories of work-

ing DX. I read them all. I couldn't miss the story of Gen Curtis LeMay and how he had Collins SSB transceivers put in all of his airplanes for long distance communications. Many years later I flew B-52s, and can report that they did indeed have SSB transceivers installed, which did work on ham frequencies. But somehow I could never generate enough courage to work any QSOs on a flight.

As I was reading about all those beautiful 100-pound rigs, I hardly noticed the shots of these tiny transceivers in the ads. They were there, alright. I brushed them aside; they weren't important; I wanted to run with the big boys. But I blinked and the 100-pounders were gone, totally gone, replaced by those little transceivers. And the little transceivers worked better, at least eventually. I never owned a 100-pounder.

We have a banquet speaker! It will be Joel Harrison, W5ZN, past ARRL president. He has scored about 370 DX entities, and has a VHF DX station to die for. I've heard him speak in the past. The guy is worth listening to on a myriad of subjects. Get your tickets now!

73 de Bob, K8KI

May Program: Single Sideband, the Formative Years

By Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

As soon as the first voice transmission made it across salt water, engineers armed with a recently-formulated description of that signal began to wonder whether something more compact in the frequency domain and less energy-consuming might do the job just as well. This was the conception of Single-Sideband, but what a protracted gestation period! Come hear about it at Tuesday's meeting. Get to Newk's a little after 6:00 pm for dinner, and the program

no later than 7:00. And someone bring the hook in case the speaker gets long-winded.



April Meeting Minutes

By Chris Reed, AI4U, NADXC Secretary/Treasurer

Attendance

Members 20 & guests 3

Review of Sign-in Sheet & DX worked

Jerry N4IR	C5DL 40/80 CW
Rob NN4NT	9LY1JM 11 band modes
Tim AB4B	VK6 Longpath 80m SSB
Steve AG4W	YJ called me in contest
Bruce AC4G	5X, C5
Ghee WL7C	CE, HK, EA, CO, ZS, YV, (All in about

15min in Int. DX contest)

Announcements

Bob welcomed guests to the meeting:

Jim Clifford NKV3

Jerry Rossano N4IR

Bob K8KI spoke about the effort to secure a banquet speaker. So far seven potential speakers have been asked and no takers thus far. Bob will continue the search by soliciting selected members from the CQ DX hall of fame list.

Tim AB4B spoke about the possibility of organizing a DXpedition in the

Caribbean with member participation. Those interested in such an effort are encouraged to contact Tim.

Steve AI4QR announced the GNU conference to be held in Huntsville.

Chris AI4U provided financial the report for April. As of April 30, the balance was \$9842.84.

Following the meeting, Dr. John Stensby N5DF delivered the program: Calibrating a Bird 43 Wattmeter.

The Origins of Coaxial Cable

By the LongPath Staff

Ever wonder where coax came from? It seems a mystery to Wikipedia, a great indisputable sources of online knowledge, as well as the LongPath staff.

One theory holds it was Oliver Heaviside, on the left, who patented it in England in 1880. Another holds it was Werner Siemens (not shown) or one of his employees in 1884, in Germany.

Yet another says "modern" coax was



invented and patented in 1929 by Bell Labs' Lloyd Espenschied and Herman Affel, shown in the picture on the right. It appears Espenschied, standing, has the first successful piece of coax, while Affel is left holding something akin to the medusa's head. Tremendous advances in synthetic rubber and plastics had been made from 1880 to 1929, and no doubt these made their way into improved low-density dielectrics. Open-wire telephone lines were a maintenance nightmare, and cable with a predictable and constant imped-



ance was necessary for long runs: modern light-weight coax fit the bill.

The allegation that Bell Labs considered "old" coax imported from England a bit on the heavy side is considered apocryphal.

The LongPath Staff

Publisher/Editor:

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Departments:

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

Chris Reed, AI4U, Minutes

Bob De Pierre, K8KI, From the President

NADXC Officers and Directors

President **Bob De Pierre, K8KI**

Vice President **Warren Alford, K4MMW**

Secretary/ **Chris Reed, AI4U**

Treasurer

At-large **Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI**

Directors **Tom Duncan, KG4CUY**